



[AP 53 - George Thaila in conversation with Dr. Joseph J. Palackal.](#)

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<b>Call Number</b>	AP 53
<b>Part Number</b>	<a href="#">Part I – Syro Malabar Church</a>
<b>Title</b>	George Thaila in conversation with <a href="#">Dr. Joseph J. Palackal.</a>
<b>Duration</b>	15:35
<b>Place of Recording</b>	Thaila's residence.
<b>Date of Recording</b>	18 December 2015.
<b>Youtube URL</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2STPeC4KRI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2STPeC4KRI</a>
<b>Video Segment(s)</b>	

## Notes

George Thaila in conversation with [Dr. Joseph J. Palackal.](#)

This is a rare, yet interesting example of singing a non-liturgical Marian devotional song in Malayalam to the melody of a popular Syriac chant. George Thaila, who was born into a musical family, recalls his early childhood experience of evening family prayer at his home at Kuninji, in the Idukki District of Kerala. In the month of May, which is devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the family would conclude the evening prayer with the song "Nalla Mātāwe mariye/ Nirmala yawusēppitāwe". George's father, Augusty Thailayil (1900-1991), who was a violinist and a church musician in the Syriac tradition, would double the melody on the violin, and one of his older brothers would do the same on the harmonium. The melody got imprinted in the mind of the young George, without knowing the source of the melody. Later, he was surprised to hear the same melody in a Syriac chant at a Knanaya wedding ceremony, sometime in 1981.

The Malayalam and Syriac chants have very different syllabic structure. The opening verse of the Malayalam chant has three words and 8 syllables, whereas the opening verse of the Syriac chant has 4 syllables in two words;

Malayalam; Na-lla| Mā-tā-we| ma-ri-ye (2 + 3 + 3 = 8)

Syriac: bar| |ma-ri-am (1 + 3 = 4)

In the musical realization, the melody of the first two verses of the Syriac text is negotiated to fit the 8 syllables of the first verse in the Malayalam text. A recording of [Bar Maryam](#), sung by Rev. Dr. Jacob Vellaian can be heard on track 25, on the CD "[Qambel Maran](#): Syriac Chants from South India" (Pan Records, Netherlands, 2002).

The interview brings out also an interesting piece of information about children's funeral. During funeral procession from home to the church, Augusty Thilayil used to play violin and sing the Syriac version of the song of shadrach, Meshach, and abednego from the Book of Daniel (3:53-90) It's not clear if this was a strictly local tradition, or this song was sung during similar occasions in other Syro Malabar Parishes..... [Joseph J. Palackal](#)

Dr. Joseph J. Palackal, CMI

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